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ABSTRACT

Lewin's field theory was used as the basis of an investigation into the influence of the supervisor in education. The focus of the study was the relationship between teacher perceptions of four kinds of supervisory styles and selected teacher attitudes. Preservice teachers were asked to classify their supervisor's behavioral style. Teacher attitudes toward educational practices and attitudes toward teaching were related to supervisory style. The data indicated that theachers' perceptions of supervisors' behavioral styles are related to attitudes held by teachers. The results also suggest that there are some basic differences in attitudes and that they change over time. The implications for supervisors and teachers are discussed. A short bibliography is provided. (Author)

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED SUPERVISOR STYLE AND TEACHER ATTITUDES

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Introduction

This study was concerned with the relationships between perceived supervisory style and teacher attitudes about education.

The major objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between four kinds of supervisory style and selected teacher attitudes. Questions of investigation were twofold. Were there any differences among the group in attitudes toward educational practices? Were there differences among the groups in attitudes towards teaching as a career?

A second objective was concerned with changes in attitudes between and within the four supervisory groups over a period of time. Was there a relationship between supervisory style and changes in beliefs about educational practices that might be related to a specific supervisory style.

This study was part of a larger investigation of the supervisory process in education. It is an extension of earlier work which dealt specifically with the supervisory styles suggested by Blumberg and Amidon. In an earlier study (1965) they presented

EA 006 114

a conceptual view of the supervisor that encompassed two dimenstions - directedness and indirectedness. The conceptual view had its origins in work conducted by Flanders (1960) in his study of teacher behavior.

The 1965 study produced results that led Blumberg to conclude that "In general, for example, supervisory behavior that was seen as being high direct, high indirect or low direct, high indirect produced more favorable teacher reactions on the productivity, communications and learning scales than did behavior that was seen as"...falling in the other supervisory styles.

A second study by Blumberg (1966) pursued the question of interpersonal relations between supervisor and teacher. The results of the study led the author to conclude that "...differential perceptions of supervisory behavioral styles tend to produce differential perceptions of the state of interpersonal relations that exist between a teacher and a supervisor." The styles that had more emphasis on indirect behavior produced more positive results.

A study by Blumberg and Weber (1968) concerning supervisory style and morale resulted in authors' conclusions that "high to low morale scores were related to perceptions of supervisory behavior styles in the following order: low direct, high indirect; high direct, high indirect; high direct, high indirect; high direct, low indirect; and low direct, low indirect." The supervisory style with a heavy loading on indirectedness or asking behavior scored higher on morale as perceived by the teachers.

The studies conducted by Blumberg and others lend support to the belief that one's supervisory style has a strong influence on the work and interpersonal environment encountered in supervision. The extent of the influence and the nature of the variables involved requires further research. This view of supervisory style prompted the study of relationships that might exist between supervisory style and attitudes.

Rationale

The role of a supervisor involves two major dimensions; the first is concerned with maintaining successful programs. This means that supervisory effort must be directed toward resources and people in order to facilitate the maintainance of a program. Supervisory style with regard to interactions with key personnel such as teachers, is of utmost importance. This dimension is widely accepted by the educational profession and potential supervisors are taught specific skills of program maintainance under the rubic of "human relations" or "facilitation."

The second dimension is more complex for it involves program change and hence, people change. Lewin has suggested that change involves unfreezing a person or group at their current operating level and inducing movement toward a new level of operation and refreezing at that new level. His belief has been equated with a biological balance called homeoestasis. Stated simply it implies that people have reached some state of balance with their perceived environment. This includes attitudes, behavior, interpersonal relationships, etc. We are held in relative balance by restraining

forces and driving forces in our environment and we gain security from this relative balance. Restraining forces may be decreased or driving forces may be increased to induce unfreezing and movement.

Lewin's concept of change may be further clarified by relating the concept to steps in planned change suggested by Bushnell (1971).

1. Diagnose the problem.
2. Formulate objectives.
3. Identify constraints and needed resources.
4. Select potential solutions.
5. Evaluate alternatives.
6. Implement selected alternative.

Steps one, two and three may be viewed as part of the "unfreezing" stage suggested by Lewin. Steps four and five fall into the "movement" phase for they involve some commitment to a new solution or alternative. Step six falls within the "movement" and the "refreezing" phase as suggested by Lewin.

Conceptual frameworks for change have been codified for use by educational supervisors. Most of these focus upon people and people change. Lewin's concept of change in people focuses upon the perceptions of the person to be changed. This same crucial element is the focus of our study.

PROCEDURE

Sample

The participants in this study consisted of ninety-two preservice teachers enrolled in student teaching at a [redacted] university. The preservice teachers were completing their requirements for education degrees and most were seeking positions as teachers in public school systems. The participants were teaching in large and small schools situated in rural, suburban and urban settings. Most of the participants were female and their ages ranged from 21 years to 23 years. Those participants whose perception of supervisory style changed were not included in final statistical treatment.

Instruments

Independent Variable. The Supervisor Behavior Style Scale developed by Blumberg and Amidon (1965) was used to classify participants according to their perception of supervisor style. This instrument required student teachers to rate their cooperating teacher on a nonvalue basis. Such ratings included the amount of emphasis they saw their cooperating teachers putting on nine different behavioral interaction areas (for example, giving suggestions, asking questions, giving information, etc.). Each item may be rated from one to six - "no emphasis" to "very heavy emphasis." Three items are categorized as direct and six items as indirect. The range of indirect scores could be from 6 to 36 and the range

of direct scores from 3 to 18.

Dependent Variables. The Education Scale (ES) developed by Kerlinger (1959b) was used to measure participant attitudes toward education. The ES is divided into two subscales: progressive and traditional. It contains 20 Likert type items that are scored from -3 to +3 which indicates a range from "disagree very strongly" to "agree very strongly." The total score is computed by subtracting the traditional sub-scale score from the progressive scale score. The final total score reflects favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward progressive education.

Shaw (1969) reported that total scale reliabilities ranged from .68 to .81 with a value of .83 for overall samples and scales. Test-retest reliability coeficients from 106 students in education yielded a .76 for the total scale.

The Attitudes Toward Teaching as a Career Scale (ATTC) was used to measure participant attitudes toward the teaching career they were about to enter.

The Attitudes Toward Teaching as a Career Scale is an 11 item Likert scale developed by Merwin and DiVesta (1959, 1960). The effective scale provides response modes ranging from "strongly agree" with items to "strongly disagree."

The attitude score is the sum of the attitude scores but some items are reversed (unfavorable items changed to favorable direction) before the summated score is computed. The theoretical range is from 11 to 66 with a lower score indicating a more favorable attitude toward teaching as a career.

The reliability of the instrument was shown to be .71 using corrected split half methods. Test-retest reliability was .79 after a four-month interval.

Method

A personal data questionnaire, the Education Scale, the Attitudes Toward Teaching as a Career Scale and a nine-point Teacher Perception of Supervisory Behavior form were administered to all participants. The supervisory scale developed by Blumberg and Amidon was used to classify the participants according to their perceptions into four supervisory groups:

1. high direct, high indirect (HDHI) - a supervisor is perceived as suggesting and asking.
2. high direct, low indirect (HDLI) - a supervisor is perceived as doing much criticizing but little asking.
3. low direct, high indirect (LDHI) - a supervisor is pereeived as doing little telling but much question asking.
4. low direct, low indirect (LDLI) - a supervisor is perceived as doing little or rather passive.

The dependent measures in this study were scores on Kerlinger's Education Scale (ES) and Merwin's Attitudes Toward Teaching as a Career (ATTC). The participants were asked to complete the forms at different times during the course of the school year. The first administration of the instruments occurred three weeks after the student teaching experience began and the final scale administration

occurred three days after the experience ended. Some participants were excluded from the study because of drastic shifts in perception of supervisory style or changes in student teaching assignment.

Each participant was given a code number at the first scale administration and used this code number throughout the study.

Hypotheses

The general hypothesis of this study was that there would be a relationship between attitudes held by participants and the supervisory style they perceived in their supervisor. The following operational null hypotheses were developed.

1. There would be no differences among group Attitudes Toward Education scores.
2. There would be no difference among group attitudes toward teaching as a career scores.
3. There would be no differences in attitude scores among groups over time from pretest to post-test.

Results - Discussion

A two-way analysis of variance with repeated measures was computed for each dependent variable. The results of the two-way ANOVA for the ES data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Analysis of Variance - Education Attitudes

Source	SS	DF	MS	F
Supervisory Group	1156.711	3	385.570	2.999*
Error Between	8999.108	70	128.559	
Pre-Post	212.240	1	212.240	3.041*
Group x Time	190.451	3	63.484	0.910
Error Within	4885.719	70	69.796	

*$p < .01$

The data show that the F ratio was significant at the .01 level and tends to refute null hypotheses one and three. Differences among group responses to the education scale were noted. Also such differences were recorded over time. The mean scores of each group are reported in Table 2.

Table 2

Mean Scores of Groups - Educational Attitudes

	Perceived Supervisory Style Group				
Time	HDHI	HDLI	LDHI	LDLI	Total Time
Pre	12.9	12.2	14.1	19.4	14.7
Post	16.6	11.6	19.3	19.5	16.7
Total Group	14.8	11.9	16.7	19.5	

Given significant differences among group and over time, the mean scores in this table above suggest interesting ideas. First, it may be noted that the attitudes' means for the groups increased over time from 14.7 to 16.7. Kerlinger's scale interpretation suggests that a bigger positive score indicates that participants have a more progressive view of education. When we examine the group performance of time we can see that the HDHI and LDHI groups posted the la rgest gains. This may be interpreted as participants who viewed their supervisors as being HDHI or LDHI registered greater progressive views toward education over time.

Post-test results indicated in Table 2 also show that the LDLI group registered the highest mean score as compared to the other groups. The next highest was the LDHI group, then the HDHI group, and finally the HDLI group. The LDLI group started with a high mean score and changed little over time. Even though the LDLI group scored highest on the post-test, the HDHI and LDHI groups posted high scores on the post-test. The latter findings support hypothesis two.

A two-way analysis of variance with repeated measures for the ATTC scale was computed. Results are listed in Table 3.

The results listed in Table 3 show that no significant results were obtained among the different perceived supervisory groups. No significant results were obtained on the ATTC scale

Table 3

Analysis of Variance - Attitudes Toward Teaching Career

Source	SS	DF	MS	F
Supervisory Group	58.659	3	19.553	0.506 N.S.
Error Between	2588.320	67	38.632	
Pre-Post	17.992	1	17.992	1.033 N.S.
Group x Time	79.796	3	26.599	1.528*
Error Within	1166.407	67	17.409	

*$p < .05$

over time either. The mean ATTC scores for each group over time are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

Mean Scores of Groups - Attitudes Towards Teaching Career

	Perceived Supervisory Style Group				
Time	HDHI	HDLI	LDHI	LDLI	Total Time
Pretest	23.9	21.1	21.6	22.8	22.35
Post-test	21.4	23.1	20.1	22.2	21.7
Total Group	22.7	22.1	20.85	22.5	

The mean scores show that the decreasing trend over time occurred because of decreases in all groups except HDLI. The HDLI group increased two full points on the ATTC scale. The HDHI group decreased by two-and-one-half points on the same scale.

The other groups registered about the same slight decrease over time. The combination of increases and decreases among groups contributed towards no significant differences over time.

The final post-test results for each supervisory group show the HDLI group with the highest score, the LDLI group with the next highest score; the HDHI group with the next highest and finally the HDHI group. Lower scores on the ATTC scale are interpreted as being more favorable towards teaching as a career.

Summary

1. Participants who perceived their supervisors as (HDHI or LDHI) high on asking behavior changed their attitudes toward educational practices over time. The changes in the direction toward more progressive beliefs occurred in supervisory climates that may be described as high on indirect supervisory behavior.

2. The participants who perceived their supervisors as being (HDHI) high on telling and high on asking behavior changed attitudes over time. The climate established by an HDHI supervisor may be related conceptually to "initiating structure" and "consideration".

3. No significant differences in attitudes towards teaching as a career were found in any group. Nor were differences in attitudes towards teaching as a career discovered among groups over time. Significant interaction affects were reported however, which suggest that a combination of supervisory style and time may account for some differences. The HDHI group changed markedly over time to a more favorable attitude toward education.

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